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AN

ESSAY

On the AGE of

LEWIS XIV.

By Mr. DE VOLTAIRE.

BEING

His Introduction to the WORK.

Tranſlated from the FRENCH

By Mr. LOCKMAN.

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AN

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On the AGE of

LEWIS XIV.

IT is not my deſign to write the Life of Lewis XIV, I having a ſtill nobler object in view. I ſhall attempt to exhibit to poſterity, not the actions of one man, but the genius of the moſt intelligent age in the annals of time.

All periods have given birth to heroes and politicians, all nations have been ſubject to revolutions, and all hiſtories are almoſt alike, with regard to a writer who intends to frame his relation merely of events: But whoſoever thinks; and, a circumſtance more rarely met with, whoſoever is poſſeſſed of taſte, reckons but four ages in the hiſtory of the world. Theſe four happy ages are thoſe in which the improvement of the polite arts was carried to a great height; and being as ſo many æras of the greatneſs of the human mind, became an example to poſterity.

The firſt of theſe ages which ſhines with true glory, is that of Philip and Alexander; or that of Pericles, Demoſthenes, Ariſtotle, Plato, Apelles, Phidias, Praxiteles; and this honour was confined within the limits of Greece, the reſt of the globe being overſpread with ignorance and barbarity.

The ſecond age is that of Julius Cæſar and Auguſtus, which is likewiſe denoted by the names of Lucretius, Cicero, Livy, Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Varro, Vitruvius.

The third is that which followed the taking of Conſtantinople by Mahomet II. At this time a family conſiſting of mere citizens, undertook a taſk which ought to have been the buſineſs of the kings of Europe. The Medicean family invited to Florence the polite arts which the Turks were driving out of Greece, their antient ſeat. Italy then ſhone with ſuperior glory. All the ſciences in general roſe there to new life. The Italians honoured them with the name of VIRTUE, as the firſt Greeks had diſtinguiſhed them by that of WISDOM. There appeared a tendency in all things towards perfection. At this time Michael Angelo, Raphael, Titian, Taſſo, Arioſto flouriſhed; engraving was invented; true architecture re-appeared in greater beauty and ſplendor than when Rome was in its triumphant

triumphant ſtate; and the Gothic ruſticity, which had diſfigured the face of all Europe, was baniſhed from Italy, to make room in all parts of it for true taſte.

The arts, which had always been tranſplanted out of Greece into Italy, met with a favourable ſoil, and ſpread themſelves on a ſudden. France, England, Germany, Spain were alſo deſirous of ſome of theſe fruits; but theſe either never reached thoſe climates, or degenerated too faſt.

Francis I. patronized the learned; a ſett of men who had nothing but their learning to boaſt of. He had architects, but none of them was a Michael Angelo or a Palladio. He attempted, but in vain, to eſtabliſh ſome ſchools of painting; not one of the Italian painters, invited by him, making a ſingle diſciple among the French. A few epigrams or wanton tales formed all our poetry. Our only proſe author in vogue, under Henry II, was Rabelais. In a word, the Italians were ſolely poſſeſſed of all the arts and ſciences; if we except muſic which was then in a very imperfect ſtate, and experimental philoſophy, with which all countries were equally unacquainted.

Laſtly, the fourth age is that called the age of Lewis XIV; and, among the four ages, this perhaps is that which comes the neareſt

neareſt to perfection. Enriched with the diſcoveries of the other three, it made a more conſiderable progreſs in one article than the three put together. All the arts indeed were not carried to a greater height than under the Medicean family, under Auguſtus, or under Alexander; but the rational faculties of man in general have been very much cultivated and improved. True philoſophy was not known till this æra; and it may be juſtly affirmed, that the univerſal revolution which was brought about, in our arts, our genius, our manners, and our government (to compute from the latter part of Cardinal Richelieu's adminiſtration to thoſe years which followed the death of Lewis XIV) diffuſed ſo bright a glory over our country as will diſtinguiſh it to lateſt poſterity. This happy influence was not confined barely to France, but ſpread into England, where it raiſed that emulation which this witty and ſagacious people then ſtood in need of. It has carried taſte into Germany, and the ſciences into Muſcovy; it hath even given new life to Italy, which was in a drooping condition; and Europe owes its politeneſs to Lewis XIV.

The Italians, before this period, gave the name of Barbarians to all the Ultramontanes; and it muſt be confeſſed that the

the French deſerved, in ſome meaſure, that injurious title. Our anceſtors joined the Romantic gallantry of the Moors to the ruſticity of the Goths. They ſcarcely poſſeſſed any of the amiable arts, a circumſtance which proves that the uſeful were neglected; for when a people have carried ſuch arts as are neceſſary to a requiſite perfection, they ſoon diſcover thoſe of a pleaſing and beautiful kind: and it is no wonder that painting, ſculpture, poetry, eloquence and philoſophy, ſhould be almoſt unknown to a nation, which, tho' poſſeſſed of harbours on the ocean and the mediterranean, were yet without a fleet; and, tho' immerſed in luxury, had only a few coarſe manufactures.

The Jews, the Genoeze, the Venetians, the Portugueze, the Flemings, the Dutch, and the Engliſh, traded ſucceſſively for us, we being ignorant even of the firſt principles of commerce. Lewis XIII, at his acceſſion to the throne, was not poſſeſſed of a ſingle ſhip. Paris did not contain four hundred thouſand ſouls, nor was embelliſhed with four fine edifices. The reſt of the cities of the kingdom were like the towns on the other ſide of the Loire; the whole body of the nobility fortified, throughout the provinces, in their reſpective caſtles

caſtles ſurrounded with moats, oppreſſed the laborious peaſants round them; the roads were almoſt impracticable; the towns were under no kind of regulation; the ſtate was without money, and the government very rarely had any credit among foreign nations. I muſt not conceal that France, ever ſince the declenſion of Charlemagne's family, was always more or leſs in this feeble condition; a circumſtance owing to the almoſt perpetual defects of its government.

In order for a ſtate to be powerful, the people muſt enjoy a liberty founded on the laws; or the ſupreme authority muſt be eſtabliſhed beyond controul. The French were ſlaves till about the reign of Philip Auguſtus. The lords were ſo many tyrants till the reign of Lewis XI; and the monarchs, for ever employed in maintaining their authority againſt their vaſſals, never had leiſure ſufficient for promoting the felicity of the ſubjects, nor the power to make them happy.

Lewis XI. greatly advanced the regal power, but not a ſingle action of his contributed to the glory and felicity of the nation. Under Francis I, trade, navigation, learning, and all the arts took their riſe; but his misfortunes prevented their taking

taking root in France, and they were all buried with him.

Henry the great was endeavouring to recover France from the ſtate of calamity and barbarity, into which it was relapſed, occaſioned by the diviſions that had rent it during thirty years; when he was aſſaſſinated in his capital, in the midſt of a people whom he would have rendred happy.

Cardinal Richelieu, taken up with the projects he had formed to humble the houſe of Auſtria, the Proteſtant religion, and the grandees, did not enjoy tranquillity enough, notwithſtanding his exalted power, to improve and reform the nation: however he laid the firſt ſtone of that glorious edifice.

Thus our genius, during nine hundred years, was almoſt perpetually checked and reſtrained, under a Gothic government, in the midſt of diviſions and civil wars, without laws or fixed cuſtoms, and changing every two centuries a ſtill unpoliſhed language; the licentious nobles dividing their whole lives between war and indolence, the clergy plunged in diſſoluteneſs and ignorance, and the uninduſtrious people bowed down with the weight of their miſery.

This is the reaſon why the French had no ſhare either in the exalted diſcoveries or

the wonderful inventions of other nations; and hence they have no claim to the ſea-compaſs, printing, gun-powder, looking-glaſſes, teleſcopes, the ſector, the air-pump, the true ſyſtem of the univerſe, &c. They ſpent their time in tilts and tournaments, whilſt the Portugueſe and Spaniards were diſcovering and conquering new worlds, to the eaſt and weſt of the then known world. Charles V. had laviſhed the treaſures of Mexico throughout Europe before a few ſubjects of Francis I. had found the uncultivated country of Canada. But the few things the French did in the beginning of the ſixteenth century, ſhowed the actions they are capable of performing when guided to them. It is my deſign, in the preſent work, to ſhow what they were under Lewis XIV; and I wiſh that the poſterity both of the monarch and of his people, equally fired by a glorious emulation, may endeavour to ſurpaſs, if poſſible, their anceſtors.

The reader muſt not expect to meet here with a detail of the almoſt numberleſs wars carried on in this century. I am obliged to leave to Annaliſts the care of collecting with accuracy all ſuch minute particulars, which would only divert the eye from the principal object. It is their buſineſs to ſpecify the marches of armies; and the days

days on which the trenches were opened before towns taken and recovered by force of arms, or given up and reſtored by treaties. A thouſand circumſtances which affect contemporaries fade away in the eye of poſterity and totally diſappear; eclipſed by an infinitely nobler ſpectacle, I mean the mighty events which have fixed the fate of empires. All tranſactions are not worthy of being committed to writing. My deſign in this Eſſay, is to dwell upon ſuch particulars only as merit the attention of all ages, may be deſcriptive of the genius and manners of mankind, may contribute to their inſtruction, and promote the love of virtue, the arts, and one's native country.

I ſhall endeavour to exhibit the ſtate of France, and of the other countries in Europe, before the birth of Lewis XIV. I next ſhall deſcribe the mighty events political and military of his reign, with regard to religion, which having been given to mankind as their moral director, becomes too frequently, in their hands, one of the great engines of policy. I afterwards ſhall take notice of the private life of Lewis XIV; of his ever uniform and decent life, ſo worthy the imitation of all perſons in exalted ſtations. The interior government

vernment of his kingdom, a much more important ſubject, will likewiſe take up a few ſeparate articles. Laſtly, I ſhall treat of the progreſs of the arts and ſciences; and the hiſtory of the human mind, the chief object of the preſent work.

Concerning the Chriſtian States of Europe before LEWIS XIV.

CHAP. I.

DURING a long courſe of years that part of Europe, in which the Chriſtian religion was profeſſed, if we except Muſcovy, might be conſidered as one great commonwealth, divided into ſeveral ſtates; ſome monarchical, and others of a mixt kind; ſome ariſtocratical, and others democratical; but all correſponding one with another; all profeſſing the ſame religion in ſubſtance, though divided into various ſects; all governed by the ſame principles or maxims of law and policy, unknown to the other parts of the world. From theſe maxims it is, that the European nations in queſtion never make ſlaves of the priſoners they take in war; that they pay a regard to the ambaſſadors of their enemies;

enemies; that they agree together about the pre-eminence and particular rights of certain princes, ſuch as of the emperor, of kings, and other potentates of an inferior character: and that they concur eſpecially in the ſage political maxim following, to keep the ballance of power as even as poſſible between them; employing inceſſantly negotiations, though in the midſt of war; and maintaining, at each other's courts, ambaſſadors, or leſs honourable ſpies, for theſe to give advice to all the courts of the views and deſigns of any one of them; to alarm, at one and the ſame time, all Europe; and to ſecure the weakeſt powers from thoſe invaſions, which the ſtrongeſt is ever ready to attempt.

After Charles V. the balance of Europe inclined too much towards the houſe of Auſtria. This powerful houſe, about the year 1630, poſſeſſed Spain, Portugal, the treaſures of America, Flanders, and the Milaneſe; the kingdom of Naples, Bohemia, Hungary; even Germany itſelf was become, in ſome meaſure, its patrimony; ſo that had a prince of this houſe been ſole monarch of theſe different ſtates, we may juſtly ſuppoſe he would, at laſt, have ſubdued all Europe.

The German empire is the moſt powerful neighbour France hath, and its extent

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is much the ſame. The empire indeed has not ſo much money; but then it produces a greater number of vigorous men, more inured to toil, and abounds more in mines. The government of Germany differs very little from that of France under the firſt kings of the race of Hugh Capet; a ſett of princes whoſe authority was frequently oppoſed by ſeveral powerful vaſſals, and a multitude of inconſiderable ones. In this age, ſixty free or imperial cities, about the ſame number of temporal ſovereigns; near forty eccleſiaſtical princes, all abbots or biſhops; nine electors, three of whom are kings; laſtly the emperor, the ſupreme head of the ſeveral potentates above mentioned; theſe united form the mighty Teutonic body, which, (ſo auſpicious is the German phlegm) ſubſiſts with almoſt as much harmony and order, as there was diſcord and confuſion in the French government. Every member of the empire enjoys its rights, its privileges, and engagements; and the vaſt difficulty of acquiring the knowledge of ſo copious a body of laws, whoſe authority is frequently conteſted, forms, in Germany the ſtudy of the JUS PUBLICUM, as it is called, for which the Teutonic nation is ſo famous.

The Emperor, conſidered in himſelf, would not be much more rich and powerful than

than the doge of Venice. Germany, divided into free cities and principalities, allows the head of ſo many ſtates, merely the pre-eminence, and a vaſt profuſion of honours; but neither demeſnes nor money, and conſequently no power.

He is not poſſeſſed, as emperor, of one ſingle village; only the city of Bamberg is appointed for the place of his reſidence, in caſe he has no other. Nevertheleſs, this vain, and yet ſupreme dignity, was become ſo powerful when poſſeſſed by the Auſtrians, that Europe was frequently apprehenſive of their changing this commonwealth of princes into an abſolute monarchy.

Two parties divided at that time, as they ſtill continue to do, the Chriſtian part of Europe, and particularly Germany. The firſt party is that of the Roman-Catholics, over whom the Pope has more or leſs authority; the ſecond is that of the enemies to the ſovereignty, both ſpiritual and temporal, of the Pope, and of the Romiſh prelates. The laſt mentioned party goes by the general name of Proteſtants; tho' theſe are ſub-divided into Lutherans, Calviniſts, &c. whoſe hatred to one another is almoſt as violent as that which they bear to the Roman-Catholics.

In Germany, the Evangelical or Lutheran

theran religion is profeſſed by the people of Saxony, Brandenburgh, the Palatinate, part of Bohemia, Hungary, the ſtates of the houſe of Brunſwick, Wirtemberg, &c. all the free imperial cities embraced this religion, which ſeemed better adapted than that of the church of Rome, to bodies of men jealous for their liberty.

The Calviniſts diſperſed among the Lutherans, who are moſt powerful, form but an inconſiderable party. The reſt of the empire conſiſts of the Roman-Catholics; and as theſe were headed by the houſe of Auſtria, they doubtleſs were the moſt formidable.

The wounds, not only of Germany but of all the ſtates of Chriſtendom, were ſtill bleeding; wounds they had received during the wild havock of ſo many religious wars: a fury peculiar to the Chriſtians, unknown to the idolators; and the ſad effect of that dogmatical ſpirit, which hath ſo long ſpread its contagion into all ranks of men. There is hardly a ſingle article of controverſy but has given riſe to a civil war; inſomuch that foreign nations, perhaps our poſterity, will one day be ſcarcely prevailed upon to believe, that our anceſtors whilſt they were preaching up patience during ſo long a courſe of years, drew the ſword, and ſlaughtered one another.

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In 1619 the emperor Matthias dying without iſſue, the body of the Proteſtants roſe in order to diſpoſſeſs the houſe of Auſtria of the empire, and ſeparate it from the church of Rome. But notwithſtanding theſe deſigns, Ferdinand de Gratz, Matthias's couſin, was elected emperor. He before was king of Bohemia and Hungary, by the reſignation of Matthias, and the arbitrary election of theſe two kingdoms.

This Ferdinand II. continued to defeat the Proteſtants; and was, for ſome time, the moſt powerful as well as the happieſt monarch in all Chriſtendom; a circumſtance not owing ſo much to his own conduct, as to the triumphs of his two great generals Walſtein and Tilly; in which he reſembled almoſt all the princes of the Auſtrian family, who were conquerors, without taking the field; and made happy by the ſuperior merit of thoſe choſen by them to head their armies. This monarch grew ſo formidable, that both the Proteſtants and Roman-Catholics looked upon themſelves almoſt as loſt. The alarm ſpread even to Rome, to which this title of emperor and king of the Romans gives certain chimerical pretenſions, that may however become but too real, whenever the ſlighteſt opportunity offers. Rome, on the other hand, which lays a ſtill more

chimerical claim to the empire, united with France, at this juncture, againſt the houſe of Auſtria. The money of the French, the intrigues of the court of Rome, and the cries of all the Proteſtants, rouz'd at laſt, in the midſt of Sweden, Guſtavus Adolphus; the only prince at that time who merited the title of hero, and the only one able to overthrow the Auſtrian power. Guſtavus's arrival in Germany changed the whole face of affairs in Europe. In 1631, engaging with general Tilly, he won the battle of Leipſic, ſo famous for the new ſtratagems employed by this king on that occaſion, and which are ſtill looked upon as a maſterpiece of the art military.

The emperor Ferdinand, in 1632, was upon the point of loſing Bohemia, Hungary and the Empire, but his propitious ſtar ſaved him. Guſtavus Adolphus was killed at the battle of Lutzen, juſt as victory was declaring in his favour. Thus the death of a ſingle man reſtored a power which he only could have deſtroyed.

The politics of the houſe of Auſtria, which the arms of Guſtavus Adolphus had triumphed over, oppoſed the reſt of the powers with vigour. By their means, the moſt potent princes of the empire broke off their alliance with Sweden. The victorious troops in queſtion, forſaken by their allies

allies and deprived of their king, were defeated at the battle of Nortlingen; and tho' more ſucceſsful afterwards, they yet never became ſo formidable as under Guſtavus.

Ferdinand II. dying in this interval, left his various dominions to his ſon Ferdinand III. who inherited his politics; and, in imitation of his father, made war from his cabinet. This monarch reigned during the minority of Lewis XIV.

Germany was not, at the time we are ſpeaking of, in ſo flouriſhing a condition as it has been ſince. Luxury was unknown there; and the greateſt noblemen did not yet enjoy the conveniencies of life, which were not carried thither till about the year 1686, when the French refugees ſet up their manufactures among the Germans. Theſe fruitful and populous countries had neither commerce nor money. The gravity of manners, and the heavineſs peculiar to the Germans, deprived them of thoſe pleaſures and agreeable arts which the ſagacious Italians had cultivated ſo many years, and which the induſtry of the French was now beginning to improve. The Germans, tho' rich at home, were poor abroad; and this poverty, added to the difficulty of keeping together, for any length of time, ſo many different nations under one common ſtandard, made it impoſſible for them,

as at this day, to carry a war into the territories of a neighbouring power, and continue it for any time. And indeed, the French have generally made war againſt the empire, in the empire itſelf. By the diſparity in the genius and government of the two nations, the French are fitter to attack, and the Germans to defend.

Spain, ruled by the elder branch of the Auſtrian family, had ſtruck a greater terror throughout Europe, than the Teutonic nation, after the death of Charles V; the kings of Spain being infinitely richer as well as more abſolute; and the mines of Mexico and Peru ſeeming to give them an opportunity of purchaſing the liberties of all Europe. The project of the univerſal monarchy of our Chriſtian continent, begun by Charles V; was carried on, at firſt, by Philip II. Buried in the Eſcurial, he flattered himſelf with the hopes of enſlaving the chriſtian world, by negotiations and wars. He invaded Portugal, ruined France, and menaced England: but this prince, better qualified perhaps to cheapen ſlaves at a diſtance, than to take the field againſt his enemies, added no conqueſt to that of Portugal. He ſquandered away, by his own Confeſſion, in order to ſubdue France and recover Holland, fifteen hundred millions; which, in the preſent year 1736, make

make upwards of three thouſand millions of French money. However, his treaſures ſerved to no other purpoſe, than to enrich thoſe countries which he intended to conquer.

Philip III, his ſon, of a ſtill leſs martial diſpoſition, and leſs prudent than his father, poſſeſſed but very few princely virtues. Superſtition, that vice of weak minds, threw a cloud over his reign, and enfeebled the Spaniſh monarchy. His kingdom began to be thinn'd of its inhabitants, by the numerous colonies which avarice tranſplanted into America; and in theſe circumſtances it was that this monarch drove out of his dominions upwards of 800,000 Moors; altho' it had been his buſineſs, on the contrary, to invite ſtill more into them, if the following maxim be true, That the real treaſure of a king conſiſts in the number of his ſubjects. Spain, ſince that period, has been in a great meaſure deſolate. By the imperious indolence of its inhabitants, the riches of America ſhifted hands; and all the merchants of Europe found means to ſhare in the Peruvian gold. It is to no purpoſe that a ſevere law, and which very ſeldom fails of being put in execution, excludes, from the ſeveral ports in the Spaniſh Weſt-Indies, all other nations: the merchants of France, England,

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and Italy, freighting the galleons with their goods, are the greateſt gainers on theſe occaſions; and it is for them that Peru and Mexico were conquered.

The Spaniſh greatneſs therefore, under Philip III, was a mere unweildy body without ſubſtance; and had more reputation than true ſtrength. Philip IV, who inherited his father's weakneſs, equally incapable of governing or of being governed, loſt Portugal by his ſupineneſs, Rouſillon by the weakneſs of his Arms, and Catalonia by the abuſe of deſpotic power. It was this king whom Count-Duke d'Olivares, his favourite and prime-miniſter, cauſed to aſſume the ſtile of GREAT, upon his acceſſion to the throne; poſſibly to fire him with the glorious ambition of meriting this title, of which he yet was ſo unworthy, that, though a monarch, no man dared to beſtow it upon him.

It was impoſſible for princes of this caſt to be long ſucceſsful in their wars againſt France. If they gained any advantages by our diviſions and our errors, their incapacity defeated the effects of them. Beſides, the nations they commanded over were favoured with ſuch privileges, as gave them an opportunity of becoming obſtinate ſubjects on certain occaſions. The Caſtilians enjoyed the prerogative not to fight out of

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the limits of Spain: The Arragonians were eternally conteſting for their liberty, with the royal council; and the Catalans, looking upon the kings of Spain as their enemies, did not even permit them to raiſe militia in their provinces. Thus this noble kingdom was, at the time we are ſpeaking of, powerful without, and miſerable within. Not a ſingle ſpark of induſtry ſeconded in theſe happy regions, the gifts indulged by nature. Neither the ſilks of Valencia, nor the fine wool of Andaluſia and Caſtile, were prepared by Spaniſh hands. Fine linnen was an article of luxury very ſeldom ſeen. The Flemiſh manufactures, (the remains of the houſe of Burgundy) furniſhed Madrid with all the magnificence then known. The wearing of gold and ſilver ſtuffs was no leſs prohibited in this monarchy, than they would have been in an indigent commonwealth, afraid of becoming ſtill more ſo. In a word, Spain, altho' poſſeſſed of the American mines, was yet ſo poor, that the miniſters under this Philip were reduced to the neceſſity of coining copper money, which was rated almoſt as high as if it had been ſilver. The ſovereign of Mexico and Peru was obliged to coin baſe money, to ſupply the exigencies of the ſtate. Thoſe concerned in the adminiſtration were afraid of laying perſonal

nal taxes; becauſe the trades-people and the peaſants, having very little furniture in their houſes, could never have been forced to pay them. Such was the ſtate of Spain; and yet this kingdom, united with the empire, threw a formidable weight into the balance of Europe.

Portugal was then reverting to its former ſtate as a kingdom. John, Duke of Braganza, who was looked upon as a weak prince, diſpoſſeſſed a monarch ſtill weaker than himſelf, of this province. Trade, which the Spaniards neglected thro' pride, neceſſity obliged the Portugueze to cultivate. They had juſt before (in 1641) joined with France and Holland againſt Spain. France reaped greater benefit from this revolution of Portugal, than it could poſſibly have gained by the moſt ſignal victories. The French miniſtry, altho' they did not contribute in any manner to this event, obtain'd, without taking any pains for it, the higheſt advantages that can be procured againſt an enemy; that of ſeeing him attacked by an irreconcileable power.

Portugal thus ſhaking off the Spaniſh yoke, extending its commerce, and increaſing its ſtrength, calls up the idea of Holland, which enjoy'd the ſame privileges, but in a very different manner. This little ſtate of the ſeventeen united provinces;

vinces; a barren country, unhealthy, and almoſt overflowed by the ſea, exiſted, during near half a century, an almoſt unparallelled example on this globe of ours, of the mighty things which a love of liberty, joined to indefatigable toil, are able to atchieve. This indigent people not very numerous, much leſs inured to war than the moſt inconſiderable of the Spaniſh militia, ſcarce known in Europe at this time, reſiſted the whole force of their maſters, and of their ſovereign, Philip II; baffled the deſigns of ſeveral potentates, who offered to aſſiſt this brave people with no other view but to inſlave them; and laid the foundation of a ſtate, which we have ſeen to balance the power of Spain itſelf. The deſpair with which tyranny fires the ſoul, firſt prompted them to take up Arms; liberty animated their courage; and the princes of the houſe of Orange made them excellent Soldiers. Scarce had they conquered their maſters, but they eſtabliſhed a form of government, which preſerves, as near as poſſible, an equality with regard to condition; a right the moſt natural to man.

The mildneſs of this government, and a toleration of all the various ways of worſhipping God, dangerous perhaps in any other country, but neceſſary in this, peopled Holland with a numberleſs multitude of

foreigners, eſpecially Walloons, perſecuted by the inquiſition in their native country; who from having been ſlaves, roſe to the character of citizens.

The religion of Calvin, which is the eſtabliſhed church in Holland, contributed alſo to increaſe its power. As the country was then ſo poor, it conſequently was not able to ſupport the magnificence of prelates, nor maintain religious orders; and being in want of inhabitants could not allow place to a claſs of people who bind themſelves by a vow, to permit as far as in them lies, the extinction of the human ſpecies. They had ſeen an example by England, which was become a third part more populous, ever ſince that thoſe who miniſter at the altars enjoyed the ſweetneſs of wedlock; and that the fond hopes of families were no longer buried in the celibacy of the cloiſter.

Whilſt the Dutch were thus eſtabliſhing this new government by force of arms, they ſupported it by trade. They ſailed to the furthermoſt part of Aſia, and there attacked their former maſters, who then enjoyed the countries diſcovered by the Portugueze. They diſpoſſeſſed them of thoſe iſlands where grow the rich ſpices; treaſures as real as thoſe of Peru; and whoſe culture

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conduceth as much to health, as the working in mines is mortal to man.

The East-India Company, eſtabliſhed in 1602, carried their profits to ſo great a height, that in 1620 they gained three hundred per Cent.; and theſe profits increaſed every year. This company of merchants, which in a ſhort time roſe to be a formidable power, built in the iſland of Java, the city of Batavia, the fineſt of all Aſia, and the center of commerce; a city inhabited among other people, by five thouſand Chineſe, and frequented by all nations. The company are able to fit out there thirty men of war, of forty guns each, and to raiſe twenty thouſand men, at leaſt. At the ſame time, that the governor of this Colony, who is ſimply a merchant, appears at Batavia in all the pomp of the greateſt monarchs; this Aſiatic oſtentation no way corrupts the frugal ſimplicity of the Dutch in Europe. To this trade, joined to this frugality, the ſeven united provinces owed their greatneſs. Antwerp which had flouriſhed during ſo long a courſe of years, and ſwallowed up the commerce of Venice, was now become a deſart; and Amſterdam, notwithſtanding the inconveniencies of its harbour, became in its turn, the mart of the world. The Dutch, by their amazing labours, en-

riched and beautified every part of Holland; the waves of the ſea were reſtrained by double moles; canals, dug in moſt towns, were faced with ſtone; the ſtreets became ſo many ſpacious keys, adorned with lofty trees; and veſſels, laden with merchandiſe, came up to the very houſes. Hence foreigners can never ſufficiently admire that ſingular ſpectacle, formed by the tops of houſes, the ſummits of trees, and the ſtreamers of ſhips; which exhibit at once, and in the ſame place, a proſpect of the ſea, of the town, and of the country.

This ſtate, of ſo new and peculiar a frame, had continued in ſtrict alliance, ever ſince its foundation, with France. Intereſt united them, they having the ſame enemies. Henry the Great, and Lewis XIII, had been their allies and protectors.

England, which was much more powerful, claimed the ſovereignty of the ſeas, and pretended to balance the ſeveral ſtates of Europe. But Charles I. who aſcended the throne in 1625, ſo far from being able to hold the weight of this balance, found the ſcepter dropping from his hand. His deſign was to raiſe his power to ſuch a height in England, as to make it independant on the laws; and to change the religion eſtabliſhed in Scotland: too obſti-

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nate to deſiſt from his views, and too weak to put them in execution; this kind huſband and tender father, this good man and ill-adviſed monarch, engaged in a civil war, which at laſt brought him to a ſcaffold, where, with his crown, he loſt his life.

This civil war, begun during the minority of Lewis XIV, prevented England for ſome time from concerning itſelf with the intereſts of its neighbours, whereby that country loſt its eſteem and felicity. Its trade was interrupted; ſo that all other nations imagined England was buried under its own ruins, when, on a ſudden, it emerged, and grew more formidable than ever under the government of Oliver. This man poſſeſſed himſelf of the ſupreme power, by carrying the goſpel in one hand, a ſword in the other, and by wearing the vizor of religion; and during his adminiſtration, he veiled all the crimes of an uſurper with the qualities of a great king.

This balance, which England had long hoped it ſhould be able to maintain, by means of its power, among potentates, Rome endeavoured to hold by its politics. Italy was then, as at this day, divided into various ſovereignties. That which the Pope poſſeſſeth is conſiderable enough to procure

procure him reverence, as a prince; but too inſignificant to make him formidable. The frame of the government is ſuch as no way contributes to the peopling of his country, which, at the ſame time, has little money and trade. His ſpiritual authourity (for ever a little blended with the temporal) is deſtroyed and deteſted in half the chriſtian world; and if he is looked upon as a father in the other half, ſome of his children oppoſe him now and then, juſtly and ſucceſsfully. The maxim of the French is, to conſider him as a perſon of a ſacred, but enterprizing character; a perſon whoſe toe they muſt kiſs, and ſometimes tie his hands. Some traces are ſtill remaining, in all Roman-Catholic countries, of the ſteps which the court of Rome took in order to attain univerſal monarchy. All princes of the Romiſh religion ſend to the Pope, at their acceſſion, an embaſſy of obedience, as it is called. Every crown has, in Rome, a cardinal, who aſſumes the name of protector. The Pope iſſues out bulls for all biſhopricks; and expreſſeth himſelf, in theſe inſtruments, as though he beſtowed ſuch ſees by virtue of his own authority. All the Italian biſhops, and even ſome among the French, ſtile themſelves biſhops by divine permiſſion,

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and by that of the holy ſee. He has the nomination of certain benefices in all kingdoms; and receives, by way of tribute, the firſt fruits of conſiſtorial benefices.

The monks, whoſe principals reſide in Rome, are alſo a ſett of men immediately ſubject to the Pope, and ſpread over all countries. Cuſtom, which does all things, and cauſes the world to be governed by abuſes no leſs than by laws, did not always favour princes with an opportunity of guarding entirely againſt a danger, which at the ſame time bears a relation to things uſeful and ſacred. The taking an oath of allegiance to any power but one ſovereign is, in a layman, high-treaſon; whereas, in a monk, it is a religious act. The difficulty for a perſon to know how far he is to obey this foreign ſovereign; the little care mankind take to prevent their being impoſed upon; the pleaſure they find in ſhaking off a natural yoke, to put on one which they themſelves have made choice of; a turbulent diſpoſition; the calamity of the times; theſe have too often prompted whole orders of friars, to ſerve Rome in oppoſition to their native country.

The knowledge which has enlightened France during a century, and ſpread its rays

rays into almoſt all ranks and conditions of men, has proved one of the beſt remedies againſt the abuſe in queſtion. Every man who writes a good book on this ſubject does an eſſential ſervice to kings and to nations: and one of the very conſiderable changes that hath been wrought, by this means, in our manners under Lewis XIV, is the perſuaſion which all the friars begin to entertain, that they are the king's ſubjects, before they become the Pope's ſervants. The Roman pontiff ſtill enjoys the juriſdiction, or power of judging; that eſſential mark of ſovereignty. France itſelf, ſpite of all the liberties of the Gallican church, allows final appeals to be made to Rome, in cauſes eccleſiaſtical.

If a perſon is deſirous of getting his marriage annulled; of taking to wife his couſin or his niece; or of diſengaging himſelf from his vows; he, on theſe occaſions, muſt addreſs himſelf to the court of Rome, and not to his Biſhop. Grants are rated in that city; and perſons of all conditions there purchaſe diſpenſations at all prices.

Theſe advantages, which are conſidered by many as the dregs of the greateſt abuſes; and, by others, as the relicks of the

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moſt ſacred rights, are ſupported with wonderful art. Rome employs as ſhrewd politics to preſerve its credit, as the republic of Rome did to conquer half the globe.

No court was better able to ſuit its conduct, as perſons and ſeaſons might require. The Popes are uſually old Italians, who have ſpent their whole lives in affairs, and over whom all irregular paſſions have loſt their aſcendant. Their council conſiſts of cardinals who reſemble them, and are all animated by the like ſpirit. From this council orders are iſſued, which proceed as far as China and America. In this ſenſe, the council in queſtion takes in the whole world; and what a foreigner ſaid antiently of the ſenate of Rome, may be juſtly applied to this; I have ſeen a conſiſtory of kings. Moſt of our writers have exclaimed, with great reaſon, againſt the ambition of this court; but methinks none of them hath done juſtice to its wiſdom. I do not know whether any other nation could have preſerved during ſo long a courſe of years, ſo great a number of ever-conteſted prerogatives. Any other court would perhaps have loſt them, by its pride, its want of ſpirit, its ſupineneſs, or its activity; but Rome, by uſually employing à propos reſo-

lution and compliance, has thereby preſerved whatever it was morally poſſible for it to keep. It behaved it ſelf in a groveling manner under the Emperor Charles V, ſtruck a terror into our Henry III, was alternately a friend and foe to Henry IV, quibbled with Lewis XIII, openly oppoſed Lewis XIV. when moſt formidable; and was for ever a ſecret enemy to the emperors, whom it ſuſpects more than the grand ſignior.

A few rights, a large number of pretenſions, and a ſtill greater proportion of politics, are all that now remain, in Rome, of that antient power, which, ſix centuries ago, attempted to ſubject the emperor and the empire to its triple crown. Naples is, to this day, a ſpecimen of the right which the Popes formerly arrogated to themſelves, with ſo much art and oſtentation, of creating and beſtowing kingdoms. But the king of Spain, the ſovereign of the country, left the court of Rome nothing more than the honour and danger of having too powerful a vaſſal.

To conclude, the eccleſiaſtical ſtate enjoyed the felicity of peace, which was diſturbed only by a diminutive war that broke out between the Cardinals Barberini, nephews to pope Urban VIII, and the duke of Parma; a tranſient, and almoſt bloodleſs

leſs war, ſuch as might be expected from theſe modern Romans, who were all prieſts, or courtiers of prieſts. Cardinal Barberini, author of theſe diſſentions, marched at the head of this little army, with a cargo of indulgencies. The moſt ſignal battle fought, was between four or five hundred ſoldiers of each party. The fortreſs of Picguaia ſurrendered at diſcretion, upon the approach of the artillery, which conſiſted of two carbines. Nevertheleſs, to quit theſe commotions, that no ways deſerve a place in hiſtory, more negotiations were required, than if antient Rome and Carthage had been the ſubject of them. I mention this incident only to ſhew the genius of modern Rome, which finiſheth all its affairs by negotiation, as antient Rome uſed to do by victories.

The reſt of the provinces of Italy attended to various intereſts. The Venetians dreaded the Turks and the Emperor; and ſcarce defended their dominions in terra firma, from the pretenſions of the Germans, and the invaſions of the grand Signior. It was no longer That Venice, which poſſeſſing the commerce of the world, had raiſed, 130 years before, the jealouſy of ſo many kings. The wiſdom of its government ſtill ſubſiſted,

but loſing its extenſive commerce, its ſtrength was enervated: and the city of Venice was by its ſituation, in no danger of being ſubjected; and, by its weakneſs, in no capacity of making conqueſts.

The ſtate of Florence enjoyed peace and plenty under the auſpicious government of the Family of the Medicis. By the wiſdom of thoſe princes, learning, the arts and politeneſs, to which they had given birth in this Country, continued to flouriſh there. Florence was then and afterwards, in Italy, what Athens had been in Greece.

Savoy, cruelly infeſted by a civil war, and by the French and Spaniſh forces, was at laſt entirely united in favour of France, and contributed, in Italy, to check the power of the houſe of Auſtria.

The Swiſs ſtill preſerved, as at this time, their liberties, without having any deſigns on thoſe of other nations. They ſold their troops to their neighbours, who were richer than themſelves. They were poor, and unacquainted with the ſciences, and with all thoſe arts which ſpring from luxury; but then they were wiſe and happy.

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The nations in the north parts of Europe, as Poland, Sweden, Denmark, and Muſcovy, were, like other powers, always jealous of one another, or engaged in war. In Poland then, as at this day, the manners and government reſembled thoſe of the Goths and Franks. The king was elective, and the nobles ſhared in his power; the people were ſlaves; the infantry was weak, and the cavalry compoſed of the nobility. Very few of their towns were fortified, and they had ſcarce any trade. This nation was invaded alternately by the Swedes or Muſcovites, or by the Turks. The Swedes, a people who ſhould enjoy ſtill more freedom by their conſtitution (this allowing even the peaſants to form part of the ſtates of the kingdom) but at the time we are ſpeaking of more ſubject to their princes than Poland, were commonly victorious wherever they fought, when headed by Guſtavus Adolphus and Charles Guſtavus. Denmark, antiently ſo formidable to Sweden, no longer intimidated any power; and Muſcovy was yet in a ſtate of barbarity.

The Turks did not make the ſame figure as under the Selims, the Mahomeds and the Solimans. Softneſs and effeminacy corrupted the ſeraglio, without baniſhing cruelty from it. The ſultans were

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the moſt deſpotic of monarchs, and, at the ſame time, the moſt expoſed to loſe their crown and their life. Oſman and Ibrahim had fell not long before, by the bow-ſtring; and Muſtapha had been depoſed twice. The Turkiſh empire, weakened by theſe ſhocks, was invaded by the Perſians. But whenever the Perſians diſcontinued their hoſtilities, and the revolutions of the ſeraglio were at an end, this empire grew again formidable to the Chriſtian powers. For from the mouth of the Boryſthenes, as far as the ſtates of Venice; Muſcovy, Hungary, Greece, and the Iſlands, were ſucceſſively attacked by the Turks, who, ever ſince the year 1635, never fail to carry on the war of Candia, ſo fatal to the Chriſtians.

Such were the ſituation, the ſtrength and intereſt of the principal nations in Chriſtendom, about the time that Lewis XIII. king of France, left the world.

France, united to Sweden, Holland, Savoy and Portugal; and favoured with the good wiſhes of all ſuch nations as continued unactive, maintained, againſt the Empire and Spain, a war deſtructive to both parties, and fatal to the houſe of Auſtria. This war reſembled all thoſe carried on during ſo many centuries between Chriſtian princes, in which millions of men are ſacrificed,

crificed, and provinces laid waſte, merely to gain a few frontier towns, the poſſeſſion of which is never an equivalent to what the conqueſt of them coſt.

The generals of Lewis XIII. had taken Rouſillon. The Catalans had juſt before thrown themſelves into the arms of France, which protected the liberties they defended in oppoſition to their kings. But notwithſtanding theſe ſucceſſes, the enemy took Corbie in 1637, and advanced as far as Pontoiſe. Half the inhabitants of Paris had fled from that city through fear; and Cardinal Richelieu, amid the mighty projects formed by him to weaken the power of the Auſtrian family, had been reduced to the neceſſity of obliging every houſe of ſome note to furniſh the army with a footman, in order to repulſe the enemy, who was advanced to the gates of the capital. The French therefore had ſuffered greatly by the Spaniards and Germans, and had done them no leſs injury.

The wars had formed illuſtrious generals, as Guſtavus Adolphus, Walſtein, the Duke of Weymar, Picolomini, John de Vert, Marſhal Guebriant, the Princes of Orange, and Count d'Harcourt. Several miniſters of ſtate made as conſpicuous a figure. Chancellor Oxenſteirn, Count-Duke d'Olivares, and particularly Cardinal

nal Richelieu, had attracted the eyes of Europe. Every age hath given birth to famous ſtateſmen and captains. Politics and arms ſeem the two profeſſions (ſuch is our unhappineſs) moſt natural to man. He is ever obliged either to negociate or fight. The moſt ſucceſsful perſons are often looked upon as the greateſt; and the publick frequently aſcribe to merit, actions which owe their atchievement entirely to fortune.

Wars were then conducted otherwiſe than under Lewis XIV. Armies were not ſo numerous; and no general, ſince the ſiege of Mets by the emperor Charles V, had headed fifty thouſand Men. Towns were beſieged and defended with fewer cannon than in this age. The art of fortification was in its infancy. Pikes and arquebuſes were ſtill uſed; and the ſoldiery had not yet laid aſide defenſive armour. Among the antient laws of nations, that of proclaiming war by a herald ſtill ſubſiſted. Lewis XIII. was the laſt prince who obſerved this ceremony; he ſending a herald to Bruſſels, to proclaim war againſt Spain in 1635.

In this age, no fight was more common than a prieſt at the head of an army. The Cardinal Infanta, and the Cardinal of Savoy, Richelieu, La Vallette, and Sourdis

Sourdis archbiſhop of Bourdeaux, had girded on the ſword and marched into the field. The Roman pontiffs ſometimes threatened to excommunicate thoſe military prieſts; and Pope Urban VIII, exaſperated againſt France, ſent word to Cardinal La Valette, that he would diveſt him of the purple, if he did not leave the camp. But being afterwards reconciled to France, he laviſhed his benedictions upon him.

Ambaſſadors, who are no leſs miniſters of peace than eccleſiaſtics, did not ſcruple to ſerve in the armies of the confederate powers to whom they were ſent. Charnacé, envoy of France in Holland, commanded a regiment there in 1637. And even d'Eſtrades the ambaſſador was a colonel in the Dutch ſervice.

France had not, in all, above fourſcore thouſand effective men on foot. The navy, which did not exiſt for ages, had been reſtored in ſome little meaſure under Cardinal Richelieu, and ruined under Mazarin. The actual revenues of Lewis XIII. did not amount to above thirty millions; but as the ſilver mark was then fixed at twenty-ſix livres, theſe thirty millions amounted to about fifty-ſeven millions of our time, in which the ar-

bitrary value of the ſilver mark is raiſed to forty-nine imaginary livres.

Trade, which is now ſpread univerſally, was in very few hands. The civil government of the kingdom was entirely neglected; a certain proof of a defective adminiſtration. Cardinal Richelieu, wholly taken up with the thoughts of his own exaltation, which was inſeparable from that of the ſtate, had begun to make France the terror of its neighbours; but had not yet found out the art to make the kingdom itſelf flouriſhing. The highways were neither repaired, nor guarded, but infeſted with robbers. The ſtreets of Paris, all of them narrow, ill-paved, and covered with the moſt loathſome filth, were over-run with thieves. It appears by the regiſters of the parliament, that the watch of this city was then reduced to forty five men; who, at the ſame time, were ill paid, and even never ſeen upon duty.

Since the death of Francis II, France had been either haraſſed by civil wars, or diſturbed by factions. The nation had never ſubmitted to the yoke, in a peaceable and voluntary manner. The nobles had been brought up from their youth, in conſpiracies, which was then the courtiers art,

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as that of ingratiating themſelves with, and pleaſing the monarch hath been ſince.

This ſpirit of diſcord and faction, which began in the court, had ſpread to the moſt inconſiderable towns, and infected every community in the kingdom. All things were conteſted, becauſe nothing was in order. Even the very pariſhes in Paris came to blows; and proceſſions uſed to fight for the honour of their reſpective banners. The canons of Notre Dame had frequently engaged with thoſe of the Holy Chapel; the parliament fought, for precedency, with the chamber of accompts, the day on which Lewis XIII. put his kingdom under the protection of the Virgin Mary. The ſtudents of the univerſity often combated together till much blood was ſpilt: but all theſe mad frays were nothing in compariſon of the fury which animated thoſe who fought duels.

I ſhall not here take notice of the methods by which arts and ſciences were cultivated. This part of the hiſtory of our manners ſhall be related in its proper place. I ſhall only obſerve, that the French were immerſed in the moſt barbarous ignorance; not excepting thoſe who looked upon themſelves as men of learning.

Aſtrologers were conſulted, and credited. All the memoirs of that time, to begin with Thuanus's hiſtory, are full of predictions. The grave and ſevere duke de Sully mentions, with a ſerious air, thoſe told to Henry IV. This credulity, the moſt infallible ſymptom of ignorance, was ſo much in faſhion, that an aſtrologer was induſtriouſly concealed in a private room, adjoining to the bed-chamber of Queen Anne of Auſtria, the inſtant Lewis XIV. came into the world. A circumſtance which will ſcarcely be believed, altho' told by Vittorio Siri, an author who lived in that age, and had the beſt informations, is, that Lewis XIII. was, from his infancy, ſirnamed the JUST, merely becauſe he was born under the ſign LIBRA.

The ſame weakneſs of mind which brought this abſurd chimera of judicial aſtrology into vogue, inclined mankind to believe in necromancy, and the poſſibility of people's being poſſeſſed with an evil ſpirit. Prieſts were ſeen every where exorciſing devils; a vile impoſture! The courts of juſtice, compoſed of magiſtrates who ought to have more ſenſe and knowledge than the vulgar, uſed to ſpend their time in trying wizards. The death of Urban Grandier, the famous pariſh-prieſt of Loudun, ſentenced to the flames as a conjurer by a commiſſion ſent from the council, will

eternally

eternally throw a ſhade over the memory of Cardinal Richelieu. People are fired with indignation to hear that both the prince, miniſter, and the judges were ſo weak, as to believe there really was ſuch a being as the devil of Loudun; or ſo barbarous, as to ſacrifice an innocent man. Lateſt poſterity will be aſtoniſhed, when they read, that Marſhal d'Encres's lady was burnt at the Greve as a witch; and that counſellor Courtin, whilſt this lady was under examination, aſking her what kind of charm ſhe had employed, to gain ſo mighty an aſcendant over the mind of Mary of Medicis; the ill-fated culprit replied, I made uſe of the power that ſtrong minds have over weak ones; which anſwer only haſtened her condemnation.

It ſtill appears, by the copy of a regiſter of the Chatelet, that a trial was begun in 1610, about a horſe which had been taught to play tricks much like thoſe we have ſeen. Both the maſter and the horſe very narrowly eſcaped being burnt, as wizards.

In the midſt of this want of arts, of polity, of reaſon, and of all things which give vigour and ſucceſs to empires, ſome men of abilities were ſeen to riſe up at certain intervals; and France, by the ſignal efforts of thoſe who preſided at the helm, grew formidable; but thoſe rare men, and thoſe tranſient efforts

under

under Charles VIII, Francis I, and in the cloſe of the reign of Henry the Great, made the general weakneſs more remarkable.

The want of knowledge in the ſeveral ranks of men, occaſioned the moſt worthy perſons to give Credit to ſuch ſuperſtious practices as reflect a diſhonour on religion. The Calviniſts, confounding the abuſes which had crept into the worſhip of the Catholic religion, with the rational worſhip of it, grew more and more inveterate againſt the church of Rome. To our popular ſuperſtitions, which are frequently heightened by riot and exceſſes, they oppoſed a ſavageneſs of diſpoſition and an aſpirity of manners; characteriſtics by which moſt of the reformers are diſtinguiſhed. Thus was France divided and degraded; and that ſociable caſt of mind, for which this nation is now become ſo famous, and ſo much the darling of others, was at that time utterly unknown.

There were then no houſes for perſons of genius and learning to aſſemble in, and communicate their ſeveral lights and diſcoveries; nor even a ſingle academy or theatre. To conclude, neither the manners, the laws, the arts, ſociety, religion, peace, nor war, were any thing like to what they afterwards appeared, in that period which is called the Age of Lewis XIV.

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